

## Welcome to the new Division of Child Care and Early Learning

On July 1, the Economic Services Administration welcomes the new Division of Child Care and Early Learning. The new division will include the Office of Child Care Policy from the Children's Administration, Working Connections Child Care Unit from the Economic Services Administration, Department of Health surveyors, and the staff of the Head Start - State Collaboration Project currently managed in the Governor's Office of Financial Management.

Rachel Langen has been appointed the new director. Langen previously served for four years as the administrator of Working Connections Child Care Program and WorkFirst Family Supports. During her 20-year career with DSHS she also provided direct services to families as a social worker in the Children's Administration and as a financial worker in Community Services Offices.

Last August, Gov. Gary Locke directed all executive cabinet agencies that administer child care and early learning programs to develop a policy agenda that balances the need for high quality programs with the demand for affordable and accessible child care.

The Governor requested and DSHS accepted the challenge to better coordinate various programs and business practices by developing an organizational structure that supports these goals.

The goals of the new division are increased coordination between the licensing and subsidy programs, both of which impact child care providers in our state, and im-

proved coordination of contracts, fiscal management, and information technology.

The new division is placed in the Economic Services Administration for several reasons. Child Care programs and licensing services are primarily funded by the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) block grant. Nearly 70 percent of the CCDF dollars are currently administered by Economic Services Administration through the Working Connections Child Care program and Building Child Care Capacity contracts.

One division administering the entire block grant will lead to better coordination of subsidy policy and service delivery, licensing, training, and contract management. ESA has experience in providing mainstream services to more than just low-income families. It provides services to the general public, such as child



support, in addition to services to low-income individuals.

Since January, work groups have been meeting to organize the details of the transition to the new division and ensure a smooth transition for families receiving child care, child care providers, and staff.

Transitions by their nature are hard on the participants. The department is committed to making this transition as smooth as possible for staff, providers, and stakeholders.

More information on the transition is posted on both the OCCP Web page at [www.wa.gov/dshs/occp](http://www.wa.gov/dshs/occp) and the ESA Intranet Web page at <http://esa.dshs.wa.gov/esa/dccel/def>.

## Keep It Current – update your messages

Every day each of us has a simple way we can improve the customer service DSHS provides - by updating our phone message.

We've all been frustrated when we call a company and are given an array of options, none of which ever reach a "real" person. Our clients and customers experience that same frustration when they call us and get an outdated message or select the "zero option" expecting to be connected with a "real" person and land in the voice mail black hole.

Treating people with courtesy and respect is one of the key goals on our DSHS Accountability ScoreCard. One way we are measuring our success in improving customer service is through measuring if staff are keeping their phone messages current.

Secretary Dennis Braddock is asking all DSHS employees to Keep It Current, to change your phone message daily, or at least weekly, to let customers know your schedule, and how to reach someone who can help if you're not at your desk.

Each morning, or at least weekly, you should update your phone message with the following:

- The date (or week)
- Times when you'll be unavailable
- Information about the option to press zero to speak to a "real" person.

### To update on Simon/Octel and Business Voice Mail systems, use the following steps:

- Dial your voice mailbox
- Enter your password
- Select 4-3-1-2-1
- Record your message
- Hit #
- Hit 1 to listen to your message
- Hit # again to finalize.

Each phone system has a coordinator. If you need assistance, contact your coordinator.

It is also important to let customers and fellow employees know through your e-mail when you're unavailable by using the Out of Office Automatic Reply function. If you don't know how to do this, contact your computer information specialist.

Your e-mail message should include:

- The dates when you will be unable to respond
- Information on how you can be reached, such as a pager or cell phone number
- The name and e-mail address of someone who can provide help.

Just taking a few minutes each day to update your messages will go along way toward showing our clients we respect them and care about their concerns.

## Inside

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Secretary's  
CORNER

by Dennis Braddock



Words about our work

Employees, clients, and the public share thoughts on the work we do

Send your thoughts and/or letters from clients to Secretary Dennis Braddock, attention: Letters to The News Connection, P.O. Box (Mailstop) 45010, Olympia WA 98504; via e-mail BraddD@dshs.wa.gov



Foster children are very special people. Through no choice of their own their lives can be filled with trauma and uncertainty. DSHS plays a key role in promoting the health and safety of the children of Washington state.

Last fall I announced our DSHS *Kids Come First Action Agenda* designed to improve the child welfare system. I am pleased to announce a major new component of our *Kids Come First* effort that we now are undertaking, in partnership with others, to bring change to our foster care system.

The *Building a Future for Washington's Children: Foster Care Improvement Plan* is the result of a very special partnership between DSHS, Casey Family Programs, and our thousands of foster parents.

We cannot provide the compassionate and healing care our troubled foster children need without the concerted effort of many partners.

Casey Family Programs is a nationally respected non-profit organization dedicated to the welfare of children. Casey is a key partner in the success of our plan.

Our other essential partners in helping children in need are the thousands of foster parents who each day open their hearts and homes to hurting, scared children.

One aspect of the Foster Care Improvement Plan I am most proud of is the Foster Parents' Rights and Responsibilities agreement forged between foster parents and DSHS. This agreement provides guidelines that direct the relationship between foster parents and DSHS social workers and managers.

This agreement gives foster parents the opportunity to provide input into decisions regarding the child in their care and to be treated as a member of the team in developing case plans for the child.

We have a critical need for more foster parents. Every day in Washington, one or more children cannot be placed in a foster home that is most appropriate for their special needs.

The Children's Administration, under the leadership of Assistant Secretary Rosie Oreskovich, is gearing up an energetic recruitment and retention effort, with a goal of adding 1,000 more homes over the next two years, and providing ongoing support to foster parents.

Children are our most precious resource. And in DSHS, their health and safety come first.

Dear Senator Murray,

I felt I should alert you to the fine job that the Mount Vernon, Washington CPS office is doing in the community. Too often, Child Protective Services has received negative publicity, and it's important to note that Kim Goche and her staff in the Mt. Vernon office far exceeded our expectations in regard to our own family crisis.

Our 26-year-old daughter is developmentally disabled and is also diagnosed with mental illness. She has been in therapy for years, and while we were able to see to it that her needs were addressed when she was our dependent, her experiences on her own have been very disturbing. It would take all day to explain the circumstances surrounding her marriage, the birth of her daughter and son, her current marital difficulties and her mental instability. Needless to say, we have

been very concern about our grand-children.

CPS has removed the children from our daughter's care several times and we have them now. It is a heartbreaking situation, but we are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, thanks to Ms. Goche and her staff.

Our oldest daughter in (another state) offered to take her sister's children permanently, and the children's mother has agreed that she, herself, is incapable of caring for her children and is cooperating fully with CPS and the court to legally transfer custody of the children to our oldest daughter.

It has been a very stressful situation, one that has been ongoing for a couple of years, and we are very grateful to Kim Goche for her compassionate and professional handling of our crisis.

Kim has kept in close touch with us every step of the way. In spite of

the heavy workload at the Mt. Vernon office, she has personally taken our case in hand and has reassured the entire family with her kindness and attention to detail.

In our opinion, Kim and her staff are tireless workers who epitomize the finest example of service to families in their profession. We are very grateful to them, and would very much appreciate it if you would forward this letter to the appropriate person who may recognize Ms. Goche and her wonderful staff in the most personal and appropriate manner.

In our opinion, the Mt. Vernon office is a model for all CPS offices to emulate. Our children deserve the very best that we can give them. The people at the Mt. Vernon office of CPS are compassionate, professional and highly ethical. They deserve to be acknowledged. Thank you very much.

— Name withheld



Litigation News

By Bernie Friedman, J.D.  
Special Assistant to the Secretary for Loss Prevention and Risk Management

As I meet with people and groups around the department, a frequent question I hear is why do we settle so many cases instead of trying them to conclusion. There seems to be a perception that the department is rolling over rather than taking strong stands. Let's talk about that.

I have been here since October 2000. During that time, the department has taken a firm stand in all cases I am aware of. Bear in mind I have concentrated on the torts cases - e.g., wrongful adoption, negligent placement of a foster child, failure to discover and prevent abuse, etc. In the torts cases, we have defended vigorously and successfully when we felt we had done nothing wrong, or, even if we did breach some duty, there was little or no damage to the plaintiff.

When we did act negligently, however, and the damage is concrete and measurable, we have tried to settle those cases for reasonable amounts. There are several reasons for those decisions.

First, if we acted negligently, we are liable and a jury is likely to find us liable. There is little sense in defending liability under such circumstances. The guideline I have always followed in defense work is to try your winners and settle your losers.

Second, in the current volatile litigation environment for state agencies, there is a risk in trying a case that a jury will express its anger at government in general and award damages far in excess of what a particular case may objectively be worth. It is better, for the time being at least, to keep our heads down until the litigation picture for state agencies is more favorable.

Third, litigation is not free. Although we do not pay the attorneys general who represent us on a fee-for-service basis, like an hourly fee in the private sector, we do pay them millions each year as a reflection of the time they spend on our cases. It is certainly in our interest to minimize that time. Moreover, the resources of the Attorney General's Office are limited. Settling cases allows reallocation of AG resources to other cases.

Fourth, litigation takes our time away from our jobs. Case-workers are often witnesses at trial, as are division directors and even assistant secretaries from time to time. Back in December, I sat in on an all-day deposition of former Secretary Lyle Quasim in a case against the department. Lyle spent an entire day just for that deposition. There are real costs in

lost FTE time preparing for and participating in trials we need to take into account when we consider settling a case. These are precisely the same considerations private sector business people take into account when they are evaluating whether to settle pending litigation rather than go to court.

In summary, nobody I know here wants to settle cases because we are afraid of trying them. Our approach is to try cases in which we believe we did nothing wrong. When our liability is questionable, however, it just makes good business for a variety of reasons to settle those cases as economically as possible.

Contact me at (360) 902-7860 or e-mail at friedbh@dshs.wa.gov to discuss loss prevention and risk management.

Correction

In the last edition, one reference to the new toll-free referral phone number for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect was incorrect. The correct number is 1-866-EndHarm (1-866-363-4276).



Sharing our successes and commitment to reaching beyond the expected to the excellent

# Quality DSHS

## Four teams improve services through the quality approach

This month we share with you the successes of four DSHS quality teams featured in the most recent Blue Book published by the Governor’s Office. Using quality principles and approaches, they are making a difference in improving how we deliver services to our clients across the state.

### DISABLED VETS BENEFIT FROM AGENCY COLLABORATION

The Department of Social and Health Services serves many veterans who have serious, chronic and acute disabilities and illnesses. Staff gather information from the Veterans Administration to determine eligibility for Medicaid. It often took more than two weeks to obtain this information. The long wait and sometimes inaccurate information resulted in needless delays in veterans receiving needed medical, prescription and long-term care services.

A team from the department and the Veteran’s Administration was formed to identify new ways to share information. A new fax back process was developed with one-day turnaround. The ultimate goal is online access between DSHS and the Veteran’s Administration. This phase of the project is the first step in making that connection.

#### Results

- Veterans receive long-term care services and medical care faster.
- Reduced eligibility wait time for veterans by 15.3 days to one-day turnaround.
- Potentially will save \$3.1 million dollars if implemented statewide.
- Reduced staff time by 30 minutes per case, saving over 2,100 FTE hours annually.

**Team members:** Bill Allman, David Armes, Chris Toombs, Kevin Krueger, Guyce Lafavour, Virginia Sledjeski-Rae, Stan Carlton, John Culhane, Rick Cook, Chandra Moss, Mike Brady

### ENERGY COSTS GOING DOWN AT FIRCREST SCHOOL

The Division of Developmental Disabilities’ residential habilitation center at Fircrest School did not have an energy conservation policy that established target temperature parameters for the various living and working environments occupied by clients and staff.

New energy systems technology allows for accurate monitoring of temperatures, but without established targets, potential savings could not be attained or tracked. Continuously increasing energy prices made the need to address this issue even more critical.

After collecting baseline data, this quality improvement team established target temperature ranges that comply with environmental regulations for all campus living and working areas. It was recognized that each living unit has specific temperature requirements depending upon the fragility of the clients. It is now possible to customize client environments for optimal comfort as well as maintain healthy and comfortable working conditions in non-client areas.

The team designed training on how to obtain optimal energy conservation and provided this training to all staff. The quality improvement team also designed and implemented strategies for recognizing and rewarding other teams and areas for their energy conservation efforts. Energy conservation has become a part of the way they do business at Fircrest School.

#### Results

- Reduced water consumption at the steam plant from 990,203 gallons in 1997 to 221,080 gallons in 2000, resulting in savings of \$58,072 between 1998 and 2000.
- Reduced fuel consumption, resulting in savings of \$116,785 from 1998 through 2000.
- Reduced overall energy consumption by 10 percent, with an anticipated savings of \$145,000 each year.

- Eliminated the need for maintenance staff to make frequent adjustments in temperature lowering operational costs and saving 160 staff hours.

- Revised the existing energy conservation policy to reflect the new requirements.

**Team Members:** Dean Crawford - Process Improvement Request Initiator, Jerry Monroe, Roberta Wagner, Kelly Melton, Y-Jut Buonto, Christian Dahl, M.D., Dan Drischel - QI Facilitator, Chris Olsen - Management Sponsor

### FOSTER CARE LICENSING IMPROVES REGIONAL CHECKLISTS

The DSHS Children’s Administration licensors use a checklist during the process of licensing or re-licensing facilities caring for children. These checklists are used to determine whether or not facilities meet appropriate WAC requirements and to aid licensor’s in evaluating whether or not the health and safety of children will be protected in the licensed facility.

The checklists had not been updated since 1981 and many licensors indicated the checklists had lost their credibility with facility staff. Checklists for newly developed facilities, such as Secure Crisis Residential Centers and Overnight Youth Shelters, had not been developed.

Regional licensors formed a quality improvement team to revise and develop checklists, making them consistent, accurate, comprehensive and user friendly. The team reviewed the content and format of 24 checklists in use across the state and meticulously checked these tools against the WAC requirements. The team also developed a Basic Licensing Checklist to be used in tandem with the program specific checklists, and a WAC Index. The newly developed checklists were tested for two months and revised based on the data gathered during the pilot.

#### Results

- Improved health and safety for children placed in licensed facilities.
- Improved compliance with WAC requirements.
- Increased credibility of the checklists and licensing process.
- Additional tools for licensors and newly-licensed facilities staff.

**Team members:** Penny Oliver, Nancy Dootson, Susan Muggoch, Lynn Craik, Sharon Porter, Barbara Rosenwald, Carmita Velasquez, Matt Cleary, Macie Marr, Sharon Braden, Bill Cleaveland, Leslie Edwards-Hill, Toni Benham

### JRA REGION 5 DECREASES MISSED APPOINTMENTS FOR THOSE IN SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT SERVICES

The Region 5 parole office provides sex offender treatment services through community contracted treatment providers to paroled juvenile sex offenders in the greater Pierce County area. Treatment consists of individual, group, and/or family counseling based on the juvenile’s treatment needs.

The parole team and provider work closely to plan and monitor client services, level of participation, and attendance. However, with transportation issues, client resistance to treatment, and scheduling conflicts, missed appointments are inevitable.

The sex offender parole team conducted a process review and determined improving communication and monitoring methods could decrease the missed treatment appointments.

A plan of action was implemented to increase communication throughout the parole team, providers, families, and clients. Parole staff reviewed and targeted the chronic no-show clients, utilizing immediate intervention, assigning community service and/or homework assignments, and addressing transportation issues. Attendance sheets were utilized by providers and faxed directly to the parole office. Arrest warrant lists and parole revocation information was made available to providers and services were delivered within the parole office to address the “no show” client issue.

(Continued on page 4)

# Using quality principles continues to result in better services

(Continued from page 3)

**Results**

- Increased offender participation in treatment services through 50 percent decrease in the number of missed treatment appointments by juvenile parolees.
- Increased communication and coordination with the parole team, clients, families, and contracted treatment providers.
- Improved coordination of service delivery systems and case

management within DSHS and with communities, monitoring services for quality and safety.

- “Improving Program Accountability” through enhancing an internal system for JRA program monitoring and management.

**Team members:** Kathleen Harvey, Jerry Lind, Luke Baker, TJ Bohl, Mike Davison, Craig Knutzen, Jason Mackey, Lisa McAllister, Pam Simmons, Seth Timber, Lisa Wadsen, Kecia Webb



## Management Book Review

By Solomon M. Uwadiale, Ph.D.  
Program Coordinator  
Employee Suggestion “Brainstorm” & Teamwork Incentive Program (TIP)

**Title:** Developing Employees Who Love to Learn  
**Author:** Linda Honold, Ph.D.  
**Publisher:** Davies-Black Publishing, Palo Alto, CA

In the old-style economy managers are responsible for guiding the organization and providing direction to the employees. In other words, employees are simply doing what they are told to do by the managers. Today’s business world of constant change, global competition, and instantaneous information create a different ballgame where employees can no longer wait around for manager’s guidance and direction. It is everyone’s responsibility to understand a current event and be prepared and ready to make quick decisions for the organization’s survival.

It is important for employees to have the knowledge, skills and information needed to make decisions. In addition, they must have self-confidence, empowerment, as well as management support to take responsibility and initiatives critical to the organizational success.

According to author Linda Honold, organizations can no longer ignore the power of a workforce in the “learning mode” - that is a workforce that is motivated and prepared to take on the responsibility for learning that will create success for the organization.

In this review we explore activities and programs that will create meaningful learning workforce.

**I. Characteristics of Learning in the Workplace**

For organizations to create and maintain a workforce of learners it must first understand the key characteristics of learning in the workplace. Most people think that learning can only occur in formal settings such as classrooms, but in the workplace, much of the learning occurs outside the formal setting. Learning can be achieved through projects, veterans, mentors or peers. One of the major characteristics of learning in the workplace is flexibility.

- Flexibility - allows employees the opportunity to explore different options available to them to learn.
- Responsibility - in the traditional setting learning is placed on the teacher to impart the knowledge on the students whereas in the workplace the employee manages the responsibility of learning.
- Knowledge - learning begins with knowledge of self. In other words effective learning requires an understanding of self-awareness and learning style.
- Time - often workplace learning occurs right on the spot for where it is needed.
- Integration - learning is integrated into daily experiences of the job.
- Unlearning - employees learning new skills often must unlearn old ways of doing things.
- Process - workplace learning is a conscious process where employees must make a conscious decision to be in a learning mode at all times.

**II. Workplace Learning Issues**

The following issues must be considered when designing workplace learning systems:

**Learning Stages** - not everybody will be at the same learning level when learning a skill. Different people have different levels of comprehension when it comes to workplace learning and as such it is important to recognize what stage of learning is targeted.

**Learning Context** - the continuum of learning involves a formal learning system led by experts in that particular discipline; semiformal learning is where the learning is facilitated but not directed; non-formal learning is where the learning may be facilitated, and self-directed; and the informal learning is where learning could be outside or inside a formal organization and could be self-directed. On the whole the learning context most familiar

to people is the formal learning in classroom setting and is led by a teacher as the expert.

**Learning Styles** - the third issue to consider when designing a workplace learning system is the issue of learning style because not everybody can learn the same way. To have an effective learning system in place it is important to accommodate all learning styles identified below:

*The activist* - this is an individual who is open-minded and very interested about learning.

*The pragmatist* - this is an individual who is a down-to-earth problem solver.

*The theorist* - this is an individual who is logical and analytical.

*The reflector* - this is an individual who is cautious and observant.

All four learning styles are great and you need to consider them all when designing a successful workplace learning system.

**Potential Outcome of Learning** - this is the final component to consider when designing a workplace learning system. There are four potential outcomes to consider and they include: knowledge learning, attitude, skill development, and aspiration learning.

**III. How to Design and Implement a Learning Workplace System**

According to the author, the best strategy of designing a successful workplace learning system involves five phases: exploration, envisioning, planning, incubation and development, and implementation and improvement.

**1. Exploration:** This is the first phase where organization makes the decision to establish a workplace learning system. In this planning phase it is important to put together a planning team with representatives from different sections of the organization to design the learning system.

**2. Envisioning:** The second phase of designing and implementing a workplace learning system is envisioning. This is the phase where you identify the relationship of learning to the organizational mission. For instance, your mission statement may identify customer service, continuous quality improvement and organizational performance measurement. It is important to articulate and reflect the learning unit in the mission statement that will support the established goals of the organization.

To enhance the learning system success, it is important to understand the organization’s fundamental principles or beliefs about learning. No learning system can be successful if there is no management support.

**3. Planning:** The third phase of designing and implementing a learning system is planning. Planning should first include an organizational assessment to determine current learning opportunities and ensure space is available to accommodate the learning. Next, determine the components of your learning system, your staffing needs, and then develop the budget for the learning system.

**4. Incubation and Development:** This is where you develop a marketing strategy to make employees aware of the opportunities. Again, it is important to have full management support. In addition, this is the phase where you develop a reward and recognition mechanism to encourage individual participation in the organizational learning system. Encourage employees to develop their own personal development plans.

**5. Implementation and Improvement:** For the final phase of designing and implementing a successful system, it is critical to launch workplace learning opportunities and at the same time establish some measures to indicate successes and failures that you can learn from or make necessary improvements. It should be well understood that workplace learning is an on-going process.

**IV. Learning Tools and Opportunities**

Before deciding which tools to include in your learning system, it is important to understand that different employees have different learning needs and skills. This understanding will enhance your program tremendously because once employees are open to learning the next challenge for the organization is to continue the learning process.

In conclusion organizations must encourage and provide employees the opportunity to integrate learning into their everyday experiences on the job. Remember, establishing a successful workplace learning system takes both individual commitment and management support. Workplace learning is a continuous process.

— Good luck. Sol



*Reaching beyond the expected to the excellent*

Each of the eight administrations has steering committees to assist in leading the department’s efforts to continue providing quality services to the residents of the state of Washington. For more information on the quality improvement activities occurring throughout the department, contact Roxie Schalliol, internal quality consultant, at (360) 902-7783 or e-mail at scharh@dshs.wa.gov .

# Community Conversations – setting health care priorities

By Jim Stevenson,  
Communications Division

An ambitious Medical Assistance Administration (MAA) project aimed at redirecting state priorities for medical assistance has reached the end of its first phase. But it's far from over. The project, called "Community

Conversations," was launched in a baker's dozen public meetings around the state over the past three months. The meetings allowed MAA staff to sit down and brainstorm with different stakeholders in the health care system - from doctors and pharmacists to Medicaid clients and hospital bookkeepers - as well as members of the public at large.

The object was to define a shared six-year vision of medical assistance that could be used to steer the state into an era of shorter resources and increasing needs, according to Jim Wilson, assistant secretary for Medical Assistance. In part, the concept also should help MAA break free of the two-year budget crunch in Olympia, aligning DSHS' priorities with the rest of the health care system.

Wilson created the project, although the meetings themselves were organized and led by a smaller MAA team headed by Tamishia Garrett, MAA advisor for Quality Improvement. Others on the team included Selia Evans, Cathy Cochran, Lenore Lawrence, Allena Barnes and facilitator Gerry Brodsky.

All of the "Conversations" generated new ideas and helped identify a clear set of potential new strategies that could play a role in redefining the way public health care fits together in the future.

A 19-member Vision Steering Team, which included partner agen-

cies and advocacy and professional organizations, refined the recommendations. By mid- to late summer, the Community Conversations team will meld the strategies into a concise package, one that will set the pace for a six-year strategic plan. Then Garrett and her

Community Conversations team will hit the road again. This time, they'll revisit the communities that hosted earlier meetings. Their mission this time will be to report to the communities, presenting the draft vision package to those stakeholders who contributed their ideas and time to the project.

## Strategies

Here are some of the draft strategies for medical assistance hammered together by the Vision Steering Team based on a series of 13 Community Conversations with people around the state this spring.

Sessions were held in Spokane, Colville, Wenatchee, Yakima, Richland, Bellingham, Vancouver, Port Angeles, Shoreline, SeaTac, Aberdeen, Marysville and Fife.

1. Focus on prevention and children: These services should be provided in the context of the family and do not necessarily imply that resources should be shifted from services such as primary care.
2. Use proven technology to simplify processes for MAA's clients and business partners. Technology can make life easier for clients accessing services.
3. Consciously managed resources: Active management of resources can make services available to more people.
4. Partner with communities to insure accessibility and accountability: Local communities and tribal governments are in the best position to address issues of access, availability and service coordination.
5. Provide comprehensive, seamless, continuous and integrated services. Clients continue to fall through the cracks, and too many services are difficult to navigate.

More comments are available on the Community Conversation Web page at <https://www2.wa.gov/dshs/maa/comconv>

## New law calls for background checks on many DSHS employees

The new Background Check Requirements (ESSB 5606) law, which becomes effective July 22, requires a background check on all DSHS employees who are currently in positions where they have or may have unsupervised access to children, juveniles or vulnerable adults.

The law also applies to applicants (including current employees seeking a new position through a job transfer, promotion, or other move) for DSHS positions that may include unsupervised access to children, juveniles or vulnerable adults.

The Background Checks Centralized Unit estimates 14,000 currently employed staff will be reviewed.

"The department requested this law because we feel it is important to hold our own employees to the same standard as we hold our community partners," said Sherry McNamara, director of Legislative Relations and the Background unit.

In April, an agency work group that includes representatives from all DSHS administrations began meeting to draft rules, develop a process for reviewing background check results. They will also identify any options for current employees disqualified from their position due to a background check disclosing a relevant criminal conviction, pending charges or disciplinary board action. The specific proposed rule, review process, and options will be negotiated with our unions.

The previous law restricted the department from disqualifying an individual based solely on a disclosure that was more than 10 years old. The new law eliminates this 10-year restriction.

A background check will be required for all employees in covered positions, even if they have already had one done. Information and details about this process will be distributed to all employees as soon as it becomes available.

## Supporting employees – our most valuable asset

By Barbara Felver, Budget Division

We spend a lot of time during the budget process focusing on dollars and the bottom line. But periodically, FTE ("full-time equivalent") counts become the focus of attention as decision-makers look for ways to downsize state government and save the taxpayer money. In most state agencies, employee compensation is the single largest component of the operating budget, and cuts can make the difference between being able to meet the organization's goals or not.

At DSHS, wages and benefits - as shown in the adjacent chart - account for just 14 percent of the \$7 billion we spend annually as an agency. Still, maintaining an adequate workforce is the difference between success and failure for our programs. And while salaries and benefits are only 14

percent of our budget, the total at about \$1 billion a year is significant. Thus, we monitor our FTE levels very carefully.

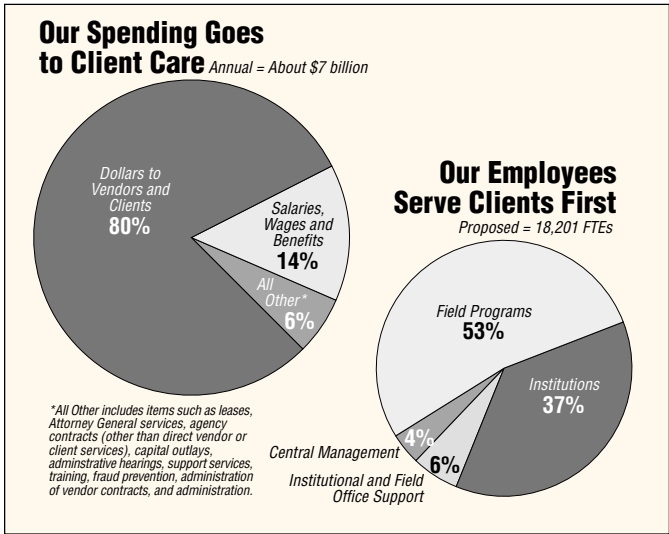
Although staffing levels drive budgets we also want to provide the best level of services possible for our

together in capacities such as executive leadership, finance, personnel, research, recovery, contracting, legislative relations, information technology, and other supporting services, like mail operations, and records retention.

It sometimes surprises people that we have been able to keep administration this low and continue operations of an enterprise that - if ranked among the Fortune 500 - would be about number 275 among national corporations. But maintaining a productive workforce to deliver on the goals and objectives of the

department is our most pressing concern.

The challenge we face as we look into the future is how - in a climate of growing budget pressures and in an agency where one in four of us is eligible to retire in the next four years - we continue to provide quality services to the residents of this state. Our success in meeting this challenge will be measured by our ability to stay focused on the two priorities that really matter: the support of our human infrastructure, and our dedication to the people we serve.



clients. So our approach has been to place employees where they can serve the public, and to keep administrative services as efficient as possible.

### Focusing our employees on client services

At DSHS, we can be proud that 96 percent of our FTEs serve clients first - 37 percent (nearly 7,000 FTEs) work in our institutions and 53 percent (nearly 10,000 FTEs) in our field programs.

Another 6 percent - as shown in the second chart - provides direct support at institutions or field offices. The remaining 4 percent provides the infrastructure that holds the agency

## Diversity Calendar

Each month *The NewsConnection* features special dates, provided by the Division of Access and Equal Opportunity. If you have a special date you would like included in the next calendar, e-mail Patte King at [Kingpl@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Kingpl@dshs.wa.gov). Not all dates can be included due to length constraints.

### JULY

- 2 Thurgood Marshall's Birthday
- 4 U.S. Independence Day
- 10 Bahamas: Independence Day
- 14 France: Bastille Day
- 16 Bolivia: LaPaz Day
- 17 Korea Constitution Day
- 18 Uruguay: Constitution Day
- 24 ADA Anniversary Day
- 28 14th Amendment 1868: Blacks become citizens

### AUGUST

- 3 Jamaica: Independence Day
- 6 Hiroshima Day
- 7 National Purple Heart Day
- 9 Nagasaki, Japan: Moment of Silence
- 10 Ecuador: Independence Day
- 14 Pakistan: Independence Day
- 15 India: Independence Day
- 18 19th Amendment ratified, women given right to vote
- 22 Ukraine: Independence Day
- 25 France: Liberation Day
- 26 U.S.: Women's Equality Day
- 31 Malaysia: National Day
- 31 Kyrgyzstan: Independence Day

## How we do the count

Technically, employees are counted by the number of hours worked in a year, with approximately 2,088 hours equaling a full-time equivalent, or FTE. A person who works half time or about 1,044 hours a year is factored as 0.5 FTE. When we add all of the factors for all of our employees, DSHS stands as the largest agency in the state with over 18,000 FTEs. Major Washington-based corporations that compare are PACCAR (Bellevue) with about 21,000 employees, Airborne Freight (Seattle) with about 20,000 employees, and Microsoft (Redmond) with about 22,000.



# 4th Annual DSHS Secretary’s Combined Fund Drive Golf Tournament

Secretary Braddock is inviting you to participate in the fourth annual DSHS Combined Fund Drive Golf Tournament. This year’s event will be held Thursday, Sept. 13, at Fort Lewis Golf Course in Tacoma. Use the registration form below to be the first of the 144 golfers to take part in this summer charity classic!

**To register:**

Send \$65, (\$60 if current CFD participant/contributor), payable to 2001 Secretary’s Golf Tournament, to Secretary’s Golf Tournament, P.O. Box 8838, Lacey, WA 98509. Fee includes Green fees, cart and barbecue, range balls, and T-shirt.

Registration deadline is Aug. 30. No more than one person with a single digit handicap per team.

**Along with your check, send in the following:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Address/Mailstop \_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate your partner’s name(s)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

For additional information,  
call (360) 438-8494.